



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Head of Center in Tashkent, Miroslav Jenca

As delivered by Political Counselor Bruce Connuck
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
April 14, 2005

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

I want to warmly welcome you, Ambassador Jenca, and thank you for your first report before this Council as Head of Center in Tashkent. The range of activities that you have outlined constitutes a focused and ambitious agenda, and one we believe the Center is well organized to undertake.

President Karimov, in his address to Parliament on January 28th, stressed the importance to Uzbekistan's future of building democracy, of improving respect for human rights, such as freedom of media, of developing civil society and of creating the conditions in which entrepreneurial activity can take root and flourish.

These four pillars are, in fact, the very foundations on which stability throughout the OSCE space rest. We therefore welcome in particular your efforts to focus the Center's energies on activities that strengthen the rule of law, encourage good governance, and ensure the protection and promotion of human rights.

Regional economic and social integration are two sides of the same coin; with greater access to markets comes enhanced understanding and greater stability. The United States therefore supports the Center's efforts to assist the Government of Uzbekistan in hosting a regional conference on integration later this year.

The programs you are developing to foster entrepreneurship among women, young people, farmers, and private businessmen directly support a key objective of the Government of Uzbekistan to promote Small and Medium Enterprise development. We encourage you to continue to expand the range and depth of the Center's activities in this area.

We welcome also the contributions the Center is making to combat trafficking in persons, to improving prison conditions, and in the fight against corruption. We encourage the government of Uzbekistan to join, as other Central Asian nations have, the Istanbul Action Plan under the auspices of the OECD Anti-Corruption Network for Transition Economies.

Finally, as the conference on labor migration hosted by Kazakhstan this past February highlighted, managing the movements of migrant workers and protecting their rights are matters of growing concern for Central Asia. We appreciate the Center's facilitating a government working group to address the legal and human rights aspects of labor migration.

We also look forward to the Center's continuing engagement with human rights NGOs on addressing law enforcement abuse, such as through prison monitoring programs and the introduction of *habeas corpus* legislation.

The OSCE is fortunate indeed to have a strong team in place in Tashkent and you, Ambassador Jenca, to head it. We look forward to working with you in the months ahead, as you implement your program in support of Uzbekistan's fulfillment of its OSCE commitments.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.